

# Democracy and Authority: Gilded Age

## Democracy and Authority: Gilded Age

Task: To examine a variety of sources about the Gilded Age (1876-1900). Your goal will be to collect information, take notes and make conclusions so you can create a visual that captures the state of American Democracy during the Gilded Age. Your image should contain the below features:

1. Title that cleverly captures image
2. Create a single visual (not an image containing several different pictures to represent the various examples) that **captures the state of American Democracy and Authority** during the Gilded Age.
3. Image must contain evidence from each of your sources- use parenthetical citation next to image to cite source.
4. As you read and watch the listed sources take notes/answer questions so that you will be able to capture the state of American democracy during the Gilded Age.

Sources to be used and cited from in creation of image:

1. Crash Course on Gilded Age- On wikispace and refer to question sheet
2. Pendleton Act
3. The Arrival of Reform: How Tammany Hall Operated
4. The Lost World of Gilded Age Politics: The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era

**1. Crash Course:** Go to my wikispace to access the link for the Gilded Age Crash Course

Directions: Watch the clip and answer the below questions.

1. *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* was written by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley. In their book, what claim do they make about the state of American Democracy?
2. What is the purpose of a political machine? (if clip moves to quickly- you can look up from another source)?
3. What were popular tactics used by political machines when attempting to secure votes from immigrants?

4. Describe the Credit Mobilier Scandal? Whose reputation did the scandal tarnish?
5. What was the Whiskey Ring? Whose reputation did it tarnish?
6. Describe the focus of the Gilded Age Presidential politics?
7. What was the Civil Service Act of 1883? What larger impact did it have on Presidential elections?
8. Identify and describe how state governments expanded their responsibility of public welfare and health during the Gilded Age.
9. What were some of the reforms the Populist Party (Former Grange movement/Farmers Alliance) desired?
10. Based on the information presented, write one-two sentences describing the state of American Democracy during the Gilded Age? (perhaps focus on- who had power? What did that mean for democracy and authority?)

Source Two

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## The Pendleton Act (1883)

Digital History ID 1098

Date: 1883

**Annotation:** George Plunkitt, a local leader of New York City's Democratic Party, defended the spoils system, through which elected politicians filled government jobs with their friends and supporters. "You can't keep an organization together without patronage," he declared. "Men ain't in politics for nothin'. They want to get somethin' out of it."

But in one of the most significant political reforms of the late 19th century, Congress adopted the Pendleton Act, creating a federal civil service system, partly eliminating political patronage. The goal was to create a more competent governmental bureaucracy and to reduce the influence of outside money on government.

Andrew Jackson introduced the spoils system to the federal government. The practice, epitomized by the saying "to the victor belong the spoils," involved placing party supporters into government positions. An incoming president would dismiss thousands of government workers and replace them with members of his own party. Scandals under the Grant administration generated a mounting demand for reform.

Ironically, the president who led the successful campaign for civil service, Chester Arthur, a Republican, was linked to a party faction from New York that was known for its abuse of the spoils of office. In fact, in 1878, Arthur had been fired from his post at New York Federal Custom's Collection for giving away too many patronage jobs.

In 1880, Arthur had been elected vice president on a ticket headed by James A. Garfield. Garfield's assassination in 1881 by a mentally disturbed man, Charles J. Guiteau, who thought he deserved appointment to a government job, led to a public outcry for reform. In 1883, Arthur helped push through the Pendleton Act. Failing to please either machine politicians or reformers, Arthur was the last incumbent president to be denied renomination for a second term by his own party.

The Pendleton Act stipulated that government jobs should be awarded on the basis of merit. It provided for selection of government employees through competitive examinations. It also made it unlawful to fire or demote covered employees for political reasons or to require them to give political service or payment, and it set up a Civil Service Commission to enforce the law.

When the Pendleton Act went into effect, only 10 percent of the government's 132,000 civilian employees were placed under civil service. The rest remained at the disposal of the party power, which could distribute for patronage, payoffs, or purchase. Today, more than 90 percent of the 2.7 million federal civilian employees are covered by merit systems.

## Briefly Skim Contents of Civil Service Act

**Document:** An act to regulate and improve the civil service of the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is authorized to appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, three persons, not more than two of whom shall be adherents of the same party, as Civil Service Commissioners; and said three commissioners shall constitute the United States Civil Service Commission. Said commissioners shall hold no other official place under the United States.

The President may remove any commissioner; and any vacancy in the position of commissioner shall be so filled by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, as to conform to said conditions for the first selection of commissioners.

The commissioners shall each receive a salary of three thousand five hundred dollars a year. And each of said commissioners shall be paid his necessary traveling expenses incurred in the discharge of his duty as a commissioner.

Sec. 2. That it shall be the duty of said commissioners:

First. To aid the President, as he may request, in preparing suitable rules for carrying this act into effect, and when said rules shall have been promulgated it shall be the duty of all officers of the United States in the departments and offices to which any such rules may relate to aid, in all proper ways, in carrying said rules, and any modifications thereof; into effect.

Second. And, among other things, said rules shall provide and declare, as nearly as the conditions of good administration will warrant, as follows:

1. for open, competitive examinations for testing the fitness of applicants for the public service now classified or to be classified here- under. Such examinations shall be practical in their character, and so far as may be shall relate to those matters which will fairly test the relative capacity and fitness of the persons examined to discharge the duties of the service into which they seek to be appointed.
2. that all the offices, places, and employments so arranged or to be arranged in classes shall be filled by selections according to grade from among those graded highest as the results of such competitive examinations.
3. appointments to the public service aforesaid in the departments at Washington shall be apportioned among the several States and Territories and the District of Columbia upon the basis of population as ascertained at the last preceding census. Every application for an examination shall contain, among other things, a statement, under oath, setting forth his or her actual bona fide residence at the time of making the application, as well as how long he or she has been a resident of such place.
4. that there shall be a period of probation before any absolute appointment or employment aforesaid.
5. that no person in the public service is for that reason under any obligations to contribute to any political fund, or to render any political service, and that he will

not be removed or otherwise prejudiced for refusing to do so.

6. that no person in said service has any right to use his official authority or influence to coerce the political action of any person or body.

7. there shall be non-competitive examinations in all proper cases before the commission, when competent persons do not compete, after notice has been given of the existence of the vacancy, under such rules as may be prescribed by the commissioners as to the manner of giving notice.

8. that notice shall be given in writing by the appointing power to said commission of the persons selected for appointment or employment from among those who have been examined, of the place of residence of such persons, of the rejection of any such persons after probation, of transfers, resignations, and removals and of the date thereof, and a record of the same shall be kept by said commission. And any necessary exceptions from said eight fundamental provisions of the rules shall be set forth in connection with such rules, and the reasons there-for shall be stated in the annual reports of the commission.

Third. Said commission shall, subject to the rules that may be made by the President, make regulations for, and have control of, such examinations, and, through its members or the examiners, it shall supervise and preserve the records of the same; and said commission shall keep minutes of its own proceedings.

Fourth. Said commission may make investigations concerning the facts, and may report upon all matters touching the enforcement and effects of said rules and regulations, and concerning the action of any examiner or board of examiners hereinafter provided for, and its own subordinates, and those in the public service, in respect to the execution of this act.

Fifth. Said commission shall make an annual report to the President for transmission to Congress, showing its own action, the rules and regulations and the exceptions thereto in force, the practical effects thereof, and any suggestions it may approve for the more effectual accomplishment of the purposes of this act.

Sec. 3. That said commission is authorized to employ a chief examiner, a part of whose duty it shall be, under its direction, to act with the examining boards, so far as practicable, whether at Washington or elsewhere, and to secure accuracy, uniformity, and justice in all their proceedings, which shall be at all times open to him. The chief examiner shall be entitled to receive a salary at the rate of three thousand dollars a year, and he shall be paid his necessary traveling expenses incurred in the discharge of his duty. The commission shall have a secretary, to be appointed by the President, who shall receive a salary of one thousand six hundred dollars per annum. It may, when necessary, employ a stenographer, and a messenger, who shall be paid, when employed, the former at the rate of one thousand six hundred dollars a year, and the latter at the rate of six hundred dollars a year. The commission shall, at Washington, and in one or more places in each State and Territory where examinations are to take place, designate and select a suitable number of persons, not less than three, in the official service of the United States, residing in said State or Territory, after consulting the head of the department or office in which such persons serve, to be members of boards of examiners, and may at any time substitute any other person in said service living in such State or Territory in the place of anyone so selected. Such boards of examiners shall be so located as to make it reasonably convenient and inexpensive for applicants to attend before them; and where there are persons to be examined in any State

or Territory, examinations shall be held therein at least twice in each year. It shall be the duty of the collector, postmaster, and other officers of the United States at any place outside of the District of Columbia where examinations are directed by the President or by said board to be held, to allow the reasonable use of the public buildings for holding such examinations, and in all proper ways to facilitate the same.

Sec. 4. That it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Interior to cause suitable and convenient rooms and accommodations to be assigned or provided, and to be furnished, heated, and lighted, at the city of Washington, for carrying on the work of said commission and said examinations, and to cause the necessary stationery and other articles to be supplied, and the necessary printing to be done for said commission.

Sec. 5. That any said commissioner, examiner, copyist, or messenger, or any person in the public service who shall willfully and corruptly, by himself or in co-operation with one or more other persons, defeat, deceive, or obstruct any person in respect of his or her right of examination according to any such rules or regulations, or who shall willfully, corruptly, and falsely mark, grade, estimate, or report upon the examination or proper standing of any person examined hereunder, or aid in so doing, or who shall willfully and corruptly make any false representations concerning the same or concerning the person examined, or who shall willfully and corruptly furnish to any person any special or secret information for the purpose of either improving or injuring the prospects or chances of any person so examined, or to be examined, being appointed, employed, or promoted, shall for each such offense be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars, nor more than one thousand dollars, or by imprisonment not less than ten days, nor more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Sec. 6. That within sixty days after the passage of this act it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Treasury, in as near conformity as may be to the classification of certain clerks now existing under the one hundred and sixty-third section of the Revised Statutes to arrange in classes the several clerks and persons employed by the collector, naval officer, surveyor, and appraisers, or either of them, or being in the public service, at their respective offices in each customs district where the whole number of said clerks and persons shall be all together as many as fifty. And thereafter, from time to time, on the direction of the President, said Secretary shall make the like classification or arrangement of clerks and persons so employed, in connection with any said office or offices, in any other customs district. And, upon like request, and for the purposes of this act, said Secretary shall arrange in one or more of said classes, or of existing classes, any other clerks, agents, or persons employed under his department in any said district not now classified; and every such arrangement and classification upon being made shall be reported to the President.

Second. Within said sixty days it shall be the duty of the Postmaster-General, in general conformity to said one hundred and sixty-third section, to separately arrange in classes the several clerks and persons employed, or in the public service at each post-office, or under any post-master of the United States, where the whole number of said clerks and persons shall together amount to as many as fifty. And thereafter, from time to time, on the direction of the President, it shall be the duty of the Postmaster-General to arrange in like classes the clerks and persons so employed in the postal service in connection with any other post-office; and every such arrangement and classification upon being made shall be reported to the President.

Third. That from time to time said Secretary, the Postmaster-General, and each of the heads of departments mentioned in the one hundred and fifty-eighth section of the Revised

Statutes, and each head of an office, shall, on the direction of the President, and for facilitating the execution of this act, respectively revise any then existing classification or arrangement of those in their respective departments and offices, and shall, for the purposes of the examination herein provided for, include in one or more of such classes, so far as practicable, subordinate places, clerks, and officers in the public service pertaining to their respective departments not before classified for examination.

Sec. 7. That after the expiration of six months from the passage of this act no officer or clerk shall be appointed, and no person shall be employed to enter or be promoted in either of the said classes now existing, or that may be arranged hereunder pursuant to said rules, until he has passed an examination, or is shown to be specially exempted from such examination in conformity herewith. But nothing herein contained shall be construed to take from those honorably discharged from the military or naval service any preference conferred by the seventeen hundred and fifty-fourth section of the Revised Statutes, nor to take from the President any authority not inconsistent with this act conferred by the seventeen hundred and fifty-third section of said statutes; nor shall any officer not in the executive branch of the government, or any person merely employed as a laborer or workman, be required to be classified hereunder; nor, unless by direction of the Senate, shall any person who has been nominated for confirmation by the Senate be required to be classified or to pass an examination.

Sec. 8. That no person habitually using intoxicating beverages to excess shall be appointed to, or retained in, any office, appointment, or employment to which the provisions of this act are applicable.

Sec. 9. That whenever there are already two or more members of a family in the public service in the grades covered by this act, no other member of such family shall be eligible to appointment to any of said grades.

Sec. 10. That no recommendation of any person who shall apply for office or place under the provisions of this act which may be given by any Senator or member of the House of Representatives, except as to the character or residence of the applicant, shall be received or considered by any person concerned in making any examination or appointment under this act.

Sec. 11. That no Senator, or Representative, or Territorial Delegate of the Congress, or Senator, Representative, or Delegate elect, or any officer or employee of either of said houses, and no executive, judicial, military, or naval officer of the United States, and no clerk or employee of any department, branch or bureau of the executive, judicial, or military or naval service of the United States, shall, directly or indirectly, solicit or receive, or be in any manner concerned in soliciting or receiving, any assessment, subscription, or contribution for any political purpose whatever, from any officer, clerk, or employee of the United States, or any department, branch, or bureau thereof, or from any person receiving any salary or compensation from moneys derived from the Treasury of the United States.

Sec. 12. That no person shall, in any room or building occupied in the discharge of official duties by any officer or employee of the United States mentioned in this act, or in any navy-yard, fort, or arsenal, solicit in any manner whatever, or receive any contribution of money or any other thing of value for any political purpose whatever.

Sec. 13. No officer or employee of the United States mentioned in this act shall discharge, or promote, or degrade, or in manner change the official rank or compensation of any other

officer or employee, or promise or threaten so to do, for giving or withholding or neglecting to make any contribution of money or other valuable thing for any political purpose.

Sec. 14. That no officer, clerk, or other person in the service of the United States shall, directly or indirectly, give or hand over to any other officer, clerk, or person in the service of the United States, or to any Senator or Member of the House of Representatives, or Territorial Delegate, any money or other valuable thing on account of or to be applied to the promotion of any political object whatever.

Sec. 15. That any person who shall be guilty of violating any provision of the four foregoing sections shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall, on conviction thereof, be punished by a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or by such fine and imprisonment both, in the discretion of the court.

Approved, January sixteenth, 1883.

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## UNIT EIGHT READINGS

# The Arrival Of Reform

Taken From:

Sources in American  
History: A Book of  
Readings (1986)

### READING FOCUS

1. What was the basic philosophy on which Tammany Hall operated?
2. Why was Plunkitt so successful?

## 167 How Tammany Hall Operated

By the end of the 1800's corrupt political machines controlled the governments of many large cities. Tammany Hall in New York City was one of the most powerful of these political machines. It stayed in power through graft, bought the votes of immigrants through favors, and set up a "balanced ticket" so that a member of each major ethnic group held a top position in city government. An important politician in Tammany Hall for many years was George Washington Plunkitt.

In 1905 a young newspaper reporter, William L. Riordan, wrote a book about Plunkitt. The book included an account, in Plunkitt's own words, on how he became a politician and a millionaire.

*A cartoonist's impression of Tammany Hall*



Everybody is talking these days about Tammany people growing rich on graft, but nobody thinks of drawing the distinction between honest graft and dishonest graft. There's all the difference in the world between the two. Yes, many of our people have grown rich in politics. I have myself. I've made a big fortune out of the game, and I'm getting richer every day. But I've not gone in for dishonest graft—black-mailing gamblers, saloon-keepers, and so on. And neither have any of the people who have made big fortunes in politics.

There's an honest graft, and I'm an example of how it works. I might sum up the whole thing by saying: "I seen my opportunities and I took 'em."

Just let me explain by examples. My party's in power in the city, and it's going to undertake a lot of public improvements. Well, I'm told ahead of time, say, that they're going to lay out a new park at a certain place.

I see my opportunity and I take it. I go to that place and buy up all the land I can in the neighborhood. Then the board of this or that makes its plan public, and there is a rush to get my land, which nobody wanted before.

Ain't it perfectly honest to charge a good price and make a profit on my investment and foresight? Of course, it is. Well, that's honest graft.

*Adapted from William L. Riordan, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall.*

Or supposing it's a new bridge they're going to build. I find out and I buy as much property as I can that has to be used for the road approaches to the bridge. I sell the property at my own price later on and drop some more money in the bank.

Wouldn't you? It's like looking ahead in Wall Street or in the coffee or cotton market. It's honest graft and I'm looking for it every day in the year. I will tell you frankly that I've got a lot of it, too.

I'll tell you of another case. They were going to fix up a big park. I learned of it and went looking about for land in that neighborhood. I could get nothing at a bargain except a big piece of swamp, but I bought it right away and held on to it. What happened was just what I counted on. They couldn't make the park complete without Plunkitt's swamp, and so they had to pay a good price for it. Anything dishonest in that?

I don't own a dishonest dollar. If my worst enemy was given the job of writing an epitaph for my grave marker he couldn't do more than write:

"George W. Plunkitt. He Seen His Opportunities, and He Took 'Em."

What's important in holding your grip on your district is to go right down among the poor families and help them in the different ways they need help. I've got a regular system for doing this.

If there's a fire on Ninth, Tenth, or Eleventh Avenue, for example, any hour of the day or night, I'm usually there with some of my election district captains as soon as the fire engines arrive. If a family is burned out, I don't ask whether they are Republicans or Democrats. I don't refer them to the Charity Organization Society, which would investigate their case in a month or two and decide they were worthy of help about the time they are dead from starvation. I just get a place for them to live, buy clothes for them if their clothes were burned up, and fix them up till they get things running again. It's philanthropy, but it's politics, too—mighty good politics. Who can tell how many votes one of these fires brings me? The poor are the most grateful people in the world, and, let me tell you, they have more friends in their neighborhoods than the rich have in theirs.

If there's a family in my district that needs help, I know it before the charitable societies

do. Me and my men are the first to help. I have a special group of people to look up such cases. The result is that the poor look up to George W. Plunkitt as a father; they come to him when they're in trouble, and they don't forget him on election day.

### READING REVIEW

1. What did Plunkitt mean when he said, "I seen my opportunities and I took 'em"?
2. What methods did Plunkitt use to gain the support of his electorate?
3. (a) According to Plunkitt, what was the difference between honest and dishonest graft? (b) Do you think politicians today make this same distinction? Cite evidence from your textbook to support your opinion.

↑ ↑  
Answer these questions

history might one hear a United States Senator credited with defining an honest politician as "one who when he is bought will stay bought"?<sup>3</sup>

Gilded Age politics fared little better at the hand of the Progressive historians of the early twentieth century. Matthew Josephson, in *The Politicos*, claimed that there were no significant differences between the major parties. Both eagerly served corporate interests. Partisanship devolved into sham battles over meaningless issues designed to divert the masses from the very real problems emerging from industrialization. Vernon Louis Parrington called it the "Great Barbecue," to which all were invited, except for inconspicuous persons like farmers and laborers.<sup>4</sup> Historians, of course, are heavily affected by the events of their own lives. Josephson was a Marxist writing during the depths of the Depression of the 1930s when establishment politicians, and even capitalism itself, appeared to have failed. Parrington was an ex-Populist refighting the epic battles of his youth.

*start here*

*Source  
4*

The trend in historical scholarship on Gilded Age politics over the past three or four decades has begun to balance the image left for us by Progressive historians. Revisionists acknowledge the greed, corruption, and even crassness of the era. But, they have changed the emphasis from such considerations to the very real fact that Gilded Age politicians and parties truly engaged the American public on fundamental issues concerning the direction of the nation and the role government should play in national life.<sup>5</sup>

From the 1830s to the 1890s, political parties dominated American politics. Voters believed that there were important ideological differences between the major parties. The Gilded Age Republican Party billed itself as the party of nationalism, prosperity, and moralism. Compared to its Democratic counterpart, the GOP was the party of activist, big government. It had saved the Union during the

<sup>3</sup>Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Boston, 1918), 294; Leland D. Baldwin, ed., *The Flavor of the Past: Readings in American Social and Political Portraiture* (New York, 1968), 162.

<sup>4</sup>Matthew Josephson, *The Politicos, 1865-1896* (New York, 1938); Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. III, *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America, 1860-1920* (New York, 1930), 23.

<sup>5</sup>Usable modern surveys of Gilded Age politics include H. Wayne Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896* (Syracuse, 1969); Morton Keller, *Affairs of State: Public Life in Late Nineteenth Century America* (Cambridge, MA, 1977); Robert W. Cherny, *American Politics in the Gilded Age: 1868-1900* (Wheeling, IL, 1997).

Civil War and Reconstruction. Likewise, it promoted a prosperous national economy through neo-mercantilist legislation. Because Republicans relied substantially upon the support of White Anglo-Saxon northern Protestants, it was the party of America's "host culture," a status which supporters believed conferred upon it the proprietary right to define true Americanism and proper conduct. The Democratic Party, in turn, was the party of Jeffersonian small government, non-interventionist laissez faire economic policies, states' rights, and personal liberties. Its adherents endorsed the Jacksonian concept that government activism primarily helped the few at the expense of the many and that local government served the interests of citizens better than centralized national power. Democrats received most of their support from a diffuse range of ethnic and cultural "outgroups," such as recent immigrants and white southerners. These groups felt threatened by the homogenizing influence of federal authority. Party loyalty for both Democrats and Republicans became an act of group identity. The strong ideological stances of Gilded Age parties had been developed during the middle years of the century and were later solidified by the events of the Civil War.<sup>6</sup>

Nineteenth century American political parties shaped campaigns into popular spectacles with speakers, parades, and other celebrations that provided voters with a substantial portion of their political education and popular entertainment. Campaigning seemed perpetual as local, state, and national elections followed rapidly upon the heels of each other. Parties employed armies of workers to propagandize potential supporters and get out the vote. The labor involved came largely from beneficiaries of the spoils system, patronage appointees holding minor public offices. Likewise, campaign expenses, such as providing campaign literature, printing ballots, and subsidizing friendly newspapers, were largely drawn from assessments on officeholder's salaries. The result was enormous popular participation in politics. Voter turnout rivaled that of western European democracies in the twentieth century, about twenty-five percent higher than in America today. Differences in wealth, education, and ethnicity have significantly affected twentieth century American voter participation, but had no

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<sup>6</sup>Richard L. McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York, 1986), 200-02, 207, 213; Robert S. Salisbury, "The Republican Party and Positive Government: 1860-1890," *Mid-America* 68 (January 1986): 17-18; Cherny, *American Politics in the Gilded Age*, 13.

impact on turnout during America's Gilded Age, or in other western democracies today.<sup>7</sup>

At the national level, the Gilded Age was a period of party equilibrium, or stalemate. Between 1876 and 1892, no president received a majority of the popular votes. Either the loser got more, or a third party received enough votes to prevent a majority victory. Both occurred in 1888. Between 1875 and 1897, the same party controlled the presidency and both houses of Congress for only four years: Republicans from 1889 to 1891 and Democrats from 1893 to 1895. Both mandates were sharply reversed at the next congressional election. The sustained political equilibrium of the period suggests Americans were sharply divided, but engaged and committed to the democratic process. The common voter understood that his ballot really mattered.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the partisan stalemate of Gilded Age politics, Republicans seemed in charge of the national government most of the time. Economic policy making lay at the center of political contention.

Republicans had set the agenda on economic policy during the Civil War. When southern Democrats withdrew from Congress in 1861, Republicans moved forward with an economic program similar to that of the defunct Whig Party's American System. The Morrill Tariff of 1861 established the principle of protectionism that dominated America until the 1930s. In 1862, Republicans passed the Homestead Act, which sped up the exploitation of America's vast natural resources. The same year, Congress passed the Land-Grant College Act, which helped bring within reach of most young Americans the inexpensive college education necessary for an industrial society to thrive. Federal authorities also provided land subsidies to western railroads, which greatly expanded commercial activity in the region. The National Banking Acts of 1863 and 1864, and an 1865 law that placed a prohibitive 10% tax on state bank notes, created a uniform national monetary system that greatly facilitated commercial exchange.

Implementation of the American System marked a significant centralizing and nationalizing of federal authority.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> (1997): 333; R. Hal-Williams, "The Politics of the Gilded Age," in *American Political History: Essays on the State of the Discipline*, eds., John F. Marszalek and Wilson D. Miscamble (Notre Dame, IN, 1997): 110-13; G. Bingham Powell, Jr., "Voting Turnout in Thirty Democracies: Partisan, Legal, and Socio-Economic Influences," in Rose, *Electoral Participation*, 5-34.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, "The Politics of the Gilded Age," 114; Robert Kelley, "The Democracy of Tilden and Cleveland," in *Democrats and the American Idea: A Bicentennial Appraisal*, ed., Peter B. Kovler (Washington, DC, 1992): 148.